

Policy 7.2.3 Council Handling of Resident Complaints on Residential Rental Issues

POLICY PURPOSE:

In establishing the tenant/landlord information, referral, and mediation service, and in contracting with Project Sentinel to provide these services to the residents of the City of Sunnyvale, the City Council has recognized the need to provide a publicly funded forum in which owners and renters may meet to work out acceptable solutions to residential rental disputes. Council also acknowledged that there may be circumstances where the use of a subpoena to bring a reluctant party to the mediation table might be appropriate, prudent, and helpful to the process.

The purpose of this policy is to provide the City Council with a basis for responding to tenants and/or landlords who are displeased with the results of the mediation process as operated by Project Sentinel. A further purpose is to set forth policy of the Council regarding persons with complaints about the level or quality of service provided by Project Sentinel and the way those services are provided.

POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the policy of the City that the City Council shall not sit as an appeals board to listen to aggrieved tenants and/or landlords who wish the City Council to intervene on their behalf to alter or modify the solution reached during the mediation or conciliation process.

It is the Council's intent that the subpoena power provided by Chapter 9.74 of the Sunnyvale Municipal Code shall be used in warranted cases as a last resort to bring reluctant landlords and/or tenants into the mediation process.

It is the policy of the City Council that the involvement of the City in tenant/landlord issues is limited to the scope of the Project Sentinel contract, and the subpoena process which is a part of that program. The City Council position is that the proper avenue for appeals from decisions reached in the mediation process should be through the appropriate court of law.

With regard to residents complaining to the City Council about the level or quality of service or the method of service delivery by Project Sentinel, Council policy is that any complaint of this nature brought to Council is an appropriate subject for Council review and action. Ordinarily, this would involve referral to staff and the Housing and Human Services Commission for study and recommendation.

(Adopted: RTC 85-162 (4/9/1985); (Clerical/clarity update, Policy Update Project 7/2005))

Lead Department: Community Development Department